Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

"Our loving Father, we thank Thee that though men may delay and hinder Thy plans, yet they cannot prevent Thy sovereign purpose from being carried out, and that, even as Thou hast promised, some day, 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' Help us so to love and serve Thee, that, that glorious day may be hastened." Amen.

Volume VIII February, 1957 Number 1

OUR PURPOSE

"To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 E. 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

Volume VIII February, 1957 Number 1

PRAYER TO GOD

Beautiful as are the temples and cathedrals built in the name of God, still the greatest temple which can be erected is that of the soul which is transformed by the consciousness of the indwelling Spirit of God empowering and vitalizing all life. It lifts one into the very presence of the Divine to contemplate the tremendous forces which could be exerted through the combination of those who believe in God.

--Carl A. Evans.

THE SEA AND HUMAN LIFE

By W. J. Thompson, D.D.

In the book of Job in the Bible we find this strange question: *"Am I a sea?"* (7:12)

The answer to Job's inquiry is—Yes! Human beings everywhere are like the sea, and the more we study this question the more we realize the remarkable analogies between human life and the ocean.

"I love the sea!" exclaimed one aboard the 'Titanic' when it crashed into a North Atlantic iceberg, April, 1912, with a loss of 1,513 lives. She was saved. She still loved the sea! This same person was on board the 'Lusitania' when it was ripped open by a German torpedo off the coast of Ireland, May, 1915. When the Lusitania went down 1,198 persons went down to death, but again she was saved, after clinging all day until after midnight to an overturned boat. But she still insisted, "I love the sea". And to prove it, she has crossed the Atlantic Ocean thirty-four times. When her husband, a naval officer, retired, they planned to celebrate the event by taking a long sea voyage.

"Am I a sea?" Yes—because both the sea and human lives possess wide freedom within definite limits. The water surface of the globe covers 146 million square miles. Human life, too, has its wide freedom—an outreach that is amazing—a remarkable ability to achieve greatness in many realms of activity. But the sea would be a terrible devastating force if it were not Divinely limited. The sea of life needs its boundaries too. The things we call "hindrances" and "limitations" are opportunities for brave and noble living. The secret of success is finding our limitations and then earnestly investing in our efforts, our best service.

Sir John Murray tells us—"The greatest depth of the sea is yet unknown. It is a profound mystery." Man—like the sea—is the home of mystery. In certain parts of the physical system; in the marvelous workings of emotional activities; in the subconscious depths of the mind; and in the secret chamber of the human soul, there are mysteries that baffle the wisest among men, and the humblest life is more mysterious than any ocean.

"Am I a sea?" Yes, comes the answer, for the sea has its tides and so do you. Drawn by the attraction of the

sun and moon, the sea advances and retires about twice in twenty-four hours and fifty minutes. Once in every twenty-four hours your physical forces are at their highest and lowest. May and October are peak seasons in the year for physical energy; midwinter and midsummer the points of low ebb. Mental capacity also has its tides, varying during the day with different individuals. Some wake up slowly; others are alert at once. Some work best in early morning; others do better about midday; and some reach their best in the evening.

Even the soul has its tidal seasons, definite periods when spiritual perception is weak, and times of great longing for the Divine. There are seasons when God seems far away, and other occasions when He comes amazingly close.

Finally, you are like the sea—a source of peril, and a center of blessing. I have seen the sea like a wild beast; seeking to destroy everything in its path. And in human experience there are storms of passion, making the sea of life a place of peril. The front pages of our newspapers present sad evidence of the storms of human passion. But there is help for all who seek it, for Christ rules the raging sea, and whispers, "Peace, be still!" And He can likewise bring peace into needy lives.

One has said: "The fertility and purifying of the earth depends largely upon the sea." And, even as "The Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters" *(Genesis 1:2)*, the Divine Spirit can move upon the sea of life to make you a means of joy and blessing to many.

oooOooo

A VESPER

At midnight when I wake alone,
With phantom fears for company,
The mind unlit, the heart acold,
Lord, let me sink to rest in Thee.

Upholder of the crystal heavens,
Whose praise is every throbbing star,
Sustain me through the night, and make
My very breathing wordless prayer.

--A. E. Johnson.

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PRAYER AND REPENTANCE

By Roy Wallace Thomas

"The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none," wrote Carlyle, and asked, "Of all acts, is not, for a man, *REPENTANCE* the most divine?" God has mercifully made it possible for every man, when he falls, to rise again. In this world where sin is universal, there is no sweeter word than repentance.

Jesus taught by many a parable that, when a man wanders away from God, he may return. He kept the truth of repentance in the forefront of his gospel. He began his ministry with the call of John the Baptist, "Repent ye." Jesus made clear that the tragedy of sin is more than offset by the glory of repentance. Repentance is divine for it opens the heart to an infusion of the Divine and restores the sinner to full sonship and fellowship in the family of God.

Jesus placed the religion of the spirit far above the religion of ritual, ceremony and outward sacrament. He approved Hosea's insight into the mind of God: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" *(Hosea 6:6)*.

He condemned the Pharisee who sought to camouflage an unrepentant heart by a show of respectability, fasting and tithing, and approved the publican who could find nothing to say for himself except, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus was pleased with the declaration he drew forth from a scribe: "there is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" *(Mark 12:33)*.

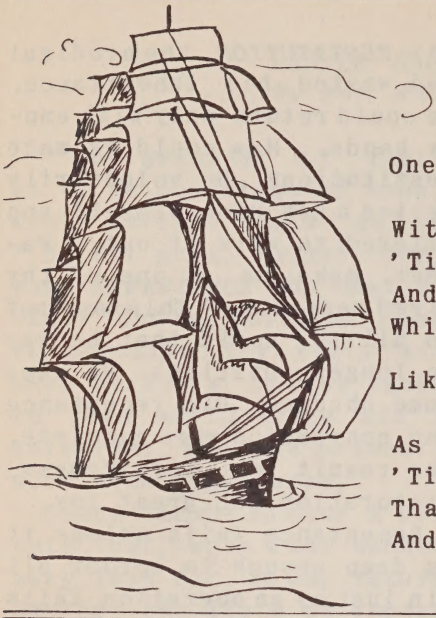
To the great passage in Deuteronomy which Israel expected every child to know, the scribe had added a bit of inspiration taken from psalmist and prophet. "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" *(Psalms 51:16,17)*. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" *(I Samuel 15:22)*.

There is no substitute for

repentance. Each man must repent for himself—no man can do it for him. And repentance is entering the life of obedience and love. The steps of repentance are pictured dramatically in Jesus' simple but powerful parable of the Lost Son *(Luke 15)*. They are:

(1) *AWARENESS* of sin. The prodigal was stabbed wide awake by sin's cost and misery. (2) *ABHORRENCE* of sin. The delights of sin had turned bitter as wormwood. The mess was offensive. (3) *RESOLUTION*. He had wasted many opportunities, but a glorious one remained. There was a way out. "I will arise, and go to my father." But good intentions are not enough. Resolution must become action in order to find healing for the soul's hurt. (4) *RETURN*. "And he arose, and came to his father." Repentance is a turning around, a conversion, an inner revolution that leads to commitment. (5) *CONFESSION*. The prodigal was honest and sincere, and so he confessed his sin to himself, to God and to the one he had injured. Confession purged his soul of the poison of selfishness, and tore out the malignant roots of sin. Confession *IS* good for the soul for it releases the "repressed complex" and gives healing rest. The reward of honest confession is peace. (6) *RESTITUTION*. The prodigal had wasted his inheritance. He could return only with empty hands. How could he make restitution? He voluntarily levied a fine upon himself and offered to work it out. "Father, make me as one of thy hired servants." This was proof to all the world that he was no longer shiftless. He came home changed. His repentance and conversion were complete. The result was forgiveness, restoration and great joy.

Repentance fails unless it is deep enough to uproot all sin, just as an operation fails that does not remove all infection. In repentance and confession the soul submits to divine surgery and is made clean *(John 15:1-3)*. Repentance is more than "sorrow for sins," more than "penance." Repentance is a change of mind to the depths of the self in which desires are converted and energies are redirected to useful and harmonious ends. The self is reorganized around a new center—the God of Jesus Christ. The life of repentance is stedfast devotion to the will of God. Repentance is an act of the whole self—"a changed mind expressed in a changed life and changed relationships." And the soul's sincere voicing of its return to God is a form of highest prayer.



It's the Way You Look at Things

One ship drives East and another drives West
With the selfsame winds that blow,
'Tis the set of the sails,
And not the gales,
Which tell us the way to go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate;
As we journey along thru life,
'Tis the set of the soul
That decides its goal,
And not the calm or the strife.

--Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

THE SEA OF LIFE

The sea is a sublime illustration of man's life. Smooth, quiet, serene, it suggests tranquil and pleasant sailing. But storms come, the wind and tempest threaten to destroy everything within their grasp. Giant waves rise to awful heights, lightning flashes, and the great conflict of material forces strikes terror to the stoutest heart. Then follows calm, the sea stretches out again in all its gentle beauty and tranquility, and the voyager looks hopefully toward the desired haven.

YOU are now traveling over the sea of life. Some days will be smooth, others stormy, but if you are intelligently equipped like the far-sighted mariner, you can be confident of a safe voyage and a friendly harbor.

From manuscripts of—
Grenville Kleiser.

"God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change.
The courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference."

(Sent by Pauline A. Taylor)

Creative Prayer

"Pray without ceasing": Christ's Command.
In silence and apart,
Though life intrude on every hand,
A prayer still in the heart.

Mid those who would revile and blame
And mock our God of love,
Their greed and hate—devouring flame—
We'll have no vision of.

Mind closed to all that's not from God,
Each minute every day;
Hold fast to His protecting Rod
No evil can betray.

This is the Word He came to bring,
That all of us may share:
Seeing God's work in everything—
Such is unceasing prayer.

--Grace Ware.

* * *

MEDITATION AS ONE OF THE HIGHWAYS TO GOD

By Edward J. Allsop

You may ask "How can a busy layman know anything about meditation?" I would say very humbly straight away that I could not carry on with my life and public duties without the help I receive through it.

Meditation to me is a means by which we receive help from God and His Servants. I will try to show we can make it a Highway to God.

Before we can proceed, we must have a clear conception of what we mean by God, and also what we mean by man.

I, of course, can only give you *my* idea, as each of us are at different stages of evolution, so our ideas are different.

To me, God is Spirit - not a Spirit, but the all pervading, loving Spirit, Omniscient, Omnipresent. He is not some large spirit in a remote Heaven and I a small spirit down here. He is not a long distance away. "In Him we live, and move and have our being." "It is His life which sustaineth us."

One of the things we have to discard before we can get very far is any unhealthy suggestions of inferiority.

Jesus Christ always appealed to the best in man. In spite of what man did, you will remember He said "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Obviously if perfection is beyond our achievement, it is foolish to appeal to men to be perfect. We must try to get our perspective right. If we place Jesus out of reach, then we may as well at once give up any idea of being like Him. Jesus is Divine, so are all men. Divinity is not different in kind, in Jesus; and not in the rest of all men.

It is only different in degree of manifestation. We are all God's children; if this is true, we must be part of the Creator of the Universe. If we can realize our divine heredity, we shall also realize our heritage, which is no less than the Kingdom of Heaven.

Having given you some idea of my conception of God, and man I can now proceed with the reason for meditation.

One object of meditation is to obtain conscious union with God. If we can contact that Divine Spirit which is in each and every one of us, we can draw strength and peace to our souls, which will sustain us in our daily lives.

Jesus often had to draw apart from his disciples. There is no doubt in my mind that during these quiet times he received strength, encouragement and guidance to carry on his great mission. If He found these quiet times necessary, how much more do we need them?

Most of us do too much asking of God, even telling him what to do, and before He can finish one thing we are asking Him to do something else. As it says in the Psalms — "Be still and *know* that I am God." That is the thing we have to do — to be still and know; by being still we give God an opportunity to let us know Him. Even in these strenuous days, not one of us is so busy that he cannot spare five to fifteen minutes each day for a quiet time; choose a time and place where you will not be disturbed, the same place, if possible.

First thing in the morning is the best time, before our minds become immersed in the problems of the day, the people we have to meet, the work we have to do.

You may say this is going to be difficult. I know it can be difficult; there was one period in my life where the only place I could find to be quiet was on a hard chair in the bathroom and I had to be there at 6:30 in the morning before the other people in the house were up.

I am afraid I can give you no easy method of meditation, because meditation means controlling our thoughts; there can be no hard and fast rule - what suits one person may not suit another.

Physical stillness is the first essential to mental stillness. A comfortable, convenient posture of the body rests the mind. Some will prefer to kneel, others to sit. I prefer the latter. I suggest you sit in an ordinary chair, sit upright — do *not* recline on the back. Meditation does not mean going to sleep. If we are going to receive any help, we have to be mentally alert all the time by disciplining the mind and body, until they learn to become non-resistant to the invading influence of God.

The time we have set aside for meditation is to be used in a manner which is entirely different from our usual activities of the day.

Instead of busying ourselves with something which keeps our attention upon external matters, we have to try to let go of material things as though they do not exist — to rule our thoughts and feeling with the idea of calm.

The person who would know God must learn to know Him in

His innermost self.

Thought control is hard to attain, and as soon as we attempt to be quiet the mind will rise up in mutiny.

Thoughts hunt and harry in packs. If we let them, they torment us out of our sleep at night and prey on us during our waking hours.

When we learn the secret of their control and suppression, we can enter upon a wonderful repose which Jesus described as "Passing all understanding."

Thinking is a power which can bind us or set us free. Thoughts surge up continually and disturb our repose of mind. So long continued has this process been going on that we have come to regard it as our normal state.

There is that part of us which is apart, which we can contact at any time once we have found the way. It is that which can immediately separate itself from all outer reactions, remain unperturbed and still; nothing can touch, nothing can reach, nothing can disturb it—there dwells the silence.

(To be contd. in next issue.)

THY WILL BE DONE

From JUST FOR TODAY

By James Keller

A friend of Lincoln tried to console the President in his many problems one day by saying: *" I hope that the Lord is on our side."*

Lincoln replied kindly but emphatically that this was not his hope. Everyone was amazed!

Then he went on to say: *" I am not at all concerned about that, for we know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."*

The problem is not a question of God fitting into our plans, because the very reason of our existence is to accommodate ourselves to His plans.

The big job to be done, especially in our day, is to fulfill that portion of the Lord's Prayer that says: *" Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

We can all help to bring the peace and order of heaven down to this troubled world.

" So let your light shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

(Matthew 5: 16).

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A NURSE'S PRAYER

Because the day that stretches out for me
Is full of busy hours, I come to Thee
To ask Thee Lord that Thou wilt see me thru
The many tasks that I may have to do.

Help me to make tempting every tray
Help me make my beds the smoothest way
Help me to sense when pain needs relief
Help me to comfort those bowed down with grief.
Help me to take to every patient's room
The light of life to brighten the gloom.

Help me to bring to every soul in fear
The feeling, O Lord, that Thou art near
And if today or tonight, maybe
Someone in my care " sets out to sea"
Help me to comfort the weak in heart
Who misunderstand why loved ones depart.

Help me to live throughout this day
As one who loves Thee well, dear Lord, I pray
Then when day is done, and I turn to seek my rest
Lord, may you truly know, I have done my best.

Composed by—
Dorothy J. Brown, RN and Esther Mamaril, RN.

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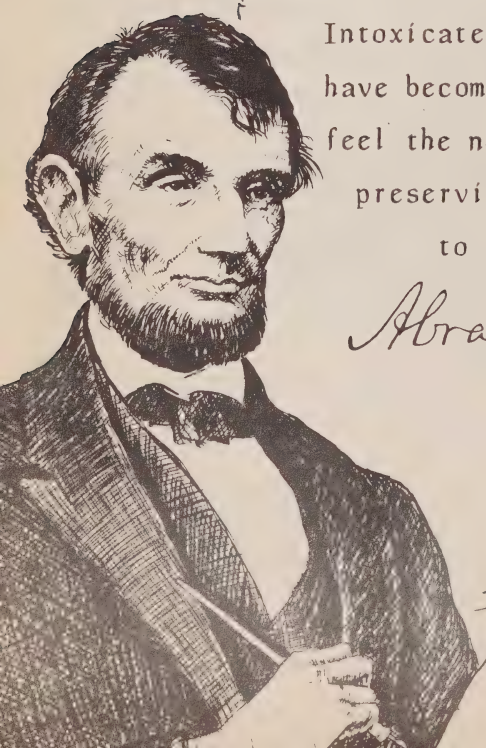
PRAYER IS THE LANGUAGE of the spirit which speaks to God. When, in prayer, we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we hear the voice of God. --*Baha'i Writings.*

WE have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

Abraham Lincoln



Are *YOU* and *I* the "We" in these words of Abraham Lincoln? Ponder on them!

Think, too, of the courage, the integrity, the justice and the self-control exemplified by George Washington as we honor him this February, 1957. His faith was great.

Wholly different in backgrounds and personalities, these two men shared a characteristic strength. Neither one was "too proud to pray". In every crisis, every conflict, they derived their strength from prayer. Commanding the highest positions, they assumed their responsibilities as humble individuals "with the help of God".

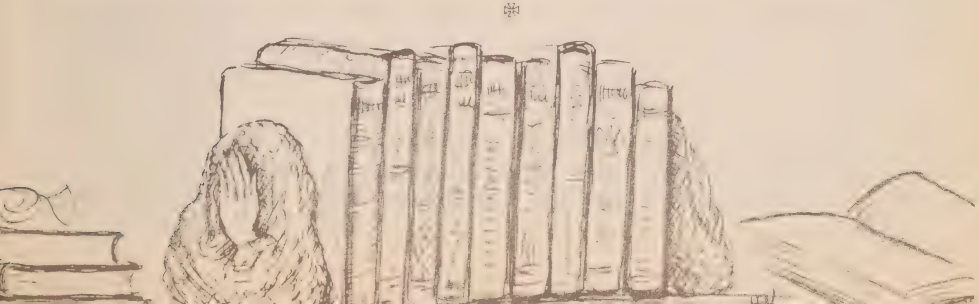
Today in our shrinking world with its multiple problems no thought of unified effort can relieve us of our responsibilities as *INDIVIDUALS*.

"Fellowship in Prayer is a beautiful manifestation of a righteous concept of world unity, through prayer."

Let us carry its message to every man in every land, urging that he pray to his God in his own way that our hearts may be joined in understanding through a knowledge of God's own truth for the happiness and good of us all, His children.

* * *

"O God, our Father, father of each one who dwells upon this earth, grant to us, Thy bewildered children who have strayed from Thee, a full realization of what Thy love might mean. Clear the mists of mutual suspicion from our minds, and fill us with trust in Thee. Draw us closer to one another and to Thy spirit in the bonds of prayer. Give to us the power and the wisdom to learn how we may work and live as in one world, and the deep assurance that, through Thee, this can be done. Help each one to become a channel through which Thy love may pour into this confused and troubled world to bring all people's hearts into Thy peace." --Amen.



VEDANTA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By Sri Nachiketa

Vedanta has gained and is gaining attention from open-minded individuals throughout the western world. In the United States alone there are more than a dozen Vedanta Centres, several of them with subsidiary branches in Europe and South Africa. Thousands of Americans are learning what Vedanta is and are being benefited by its teaching in their daily lives.

It is the universal and rational quality of Vedanta philosophy which tallies with the recent discoveries of science that attracts a true seeker of Truth or God, or Ultimate Reality. At the same time, the knowledge of Vedanta helps one understand and interpret all the different religions of the world. A teacher of Vedanta does not try to convert others. He only helps one find out the true meaning of one's own religion and to proceed forward in one's search for God.

The word Vedanta is the enjoined form of two different Sanskrit words — Veda and Anta — which mean End of Wisdom or Supreme Knowledge. It is a religious philosophy based upon the principles and purposes underlying the existence of man and the Universe. Some of its chief tenets are: Truth or God is One without a second; Man's real nature is divine; All paths lead to the same goal; etc. These quotations are English translations of well known passages from Vedas and Upanishads, the most authentic and ancient scriptures of India composed at least two thousand years before the Christian era. "The truth seeking ancient philosophers did not stop in their researches until they could unify the diverse phenomena of this universe into that Absolute Oneness, and when they discovered the one source and goal of the phenomenal universe, they tried to explain the process by which this One appears to be manifold. They discovered the doctrine, the law of evolution, that involved the phenomena of the world. It was Kapila who is recognized as the father of the theory of evolution in ancient India. He lived about fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ"—Abhedananda, Vedanta Philosophy.

The authenticity of this statement is admitted by Professor Thomas Huxley when he says, "This doctrine was known to the Hindu sages

long before Paul of Tarsus was born." As regards the achievements of the ancient philosophies of India Sir Monier Williams said that the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza; Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and Spencerites many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time.

Standing on the firm rock of science, the ancient Indian sages explained the cosmic process through which the phenomena appears to our senses. According to Vedanta there is one Life which exists, one Spirit, one Truth, one Reality. Many have the idea that Vedanta teaches that this world is an illusion. It is only a partial truth. "What Vedanta teaches as illusion is the attribution of substantia and sentience to the phenomena without recognizing the underlying Unity"— Abhedananda, Vedanta Philosophy. This Unity of being is called Existence, or Light, or Spirit, and such other various names. In Vedanta it is termed as Brahman, which means an infinite expanse. "It is the same substance which has been called by Plato 'the Good', by Spinoza 'the Substantia', by Spencer 'the Unknown and Unknowable', by Kant 'the transcendental thing-in-itself'. Schopenhaur called it 'sufficient reason'; Emerson called it 'the Oversoul'". This one Brahman or Absolute Truth or Reality is the pure existence of all things of this universe. The modern top-ranking Physicists call it the energy which lies dormant held by electrons and protons of atoms of all things of this universe. It can be called Tao from a Taoist's point of view. It is something beyond this realm of relativity. This Absolute Reality cannot be worshipped, can never be explained by any language since — Worship, Love, Law, Truth — these terms of language are all relative and as such cannot be sufficient to understand or explain that One which is beyond all relativity. Thus a student of Vedanta well understands why Lord Buddha remained silent when he was asked to express his opinion about God. He understands in his way why Lao Tse said that Tao cannot be explained by word.

This same Absolute Reality or Brahman when qualified with all pervading consciousness, omnipotence, pure love or truth, we call it God, the Father in Heaven, Allah, or Divine Mother. All these terms signify the same thing—

the Great Cosmic Force which is conscious, and all bliss. This God can be loved, can be worshipped. He answers our yearning hearts. Since He is Omnipotent, He can assume any form if He wishes. He is formless, too, and He is beyond form and formlessness. We cannot know Him completely. When God, this all pervasive consciousness or Brahman is qualified with limited self-consciousness and partial knowledge it appears as the individual soul of man. Due to our ignorance we identify ourselves with our body and remain unaware of our Divine Nature — this ignorance is the cause of all so-called misery. Thus on one side Vedanta gives expression to the highest ideal of all philosophies and on the other it gives a foundation to a system of religion which is most rationalistic. It harmonizes with the latest conclusions of science and philosophy.

The individual soul being a part of the Divinity is not a born sinner. Due to our ignorance there is a superimposition of an ego to the divinity. The ego is called 'I'. 'I' of desires, works and creates its own destiny. 'I' is responsible for all it has done today and all it will do in the future. No one else is responsible. Thus Vedanta by its theory of *KARMA** and reincarnation explains the diversity of creation. Unless we accept the theory of Karma and reincarnation we are unable to explain why people are born with ailments such as blindness for which there cannot be justification in terms of inherited constitutional defects. Thus, Vedanta teaches that God is not partial. We reap as we sow. God is not evil. He does not punish us. It is this Law of Karma which is blind and produces effects according to the cause. Thus Vedanta teaches "—there is a purpose in the process of evolution. We have come into existence, not as a mere freak of nature, not accidentally, but we are bound by certain laws. We are governed by the law of causation; we are the result of our past and our future will be the result of our present."—Abhedananda, Vedanta Philosophy.

**KARMA*— *A Sanskrit word and a very common term in Vedanta. It means "action". What one does is the cause and is bound to bring result, good or bad either in this life or in the next incarnation. The present state of a man is on the other hand the result of his actions done previously either in this life or in his past incarnation.*

The ultimate goal of this process of evolution is nothing but the unfoldment of one's own true reality which is God-realization. One goes beyond the Law of Karma and realizes his own true nature which is Divine. He then becomes one with God. He understands his oneness with the Great Cosmic Power—which is all pervading. This realization shows him clearly that in reality he is one with this whole universe — along with its all things — living or non-living.

The Western philosophy or religion does not give the scientific explanation why we should be moral. Lord Jesus the Christ taught us the high ethical law, "Love thy neighbors". Buddha went one step further and asked his disciples to cultivate "Maitri Bhavana" for all things. Maitri Bhavana means the love which mother has for her only child. Now the question arises why we should love our neighbors, why we should try to cultivate the supreme love of a mother to her only child towards all beings in this universe. Vedanta gives the most rational answer, observes Professor Paul Deussen of Kirl University in his Elements of Metaphysics. Vedanta says we cannot but love each other, since we are all part of the same substance—Brahman. "Tat tvan Asi" "Thou Art That" "By hurting our neighbors we hurt ourselves. By loving them we better ourselves. We unfold our higher nature, and live on a higher plane. We should love our neighbors not for their good deeds, not for their meritorious acts, not for their beauty but for their souls—for that oneness in spirit which cannot be separated by anything of this phenomenal universe. Here in Vedanta, we find the foundation of ethics which cannot be shaken by agnostic or materialistic thinkers of the East or of the West." —Abhedananda, Vedanta Philosophy.

When we realize this Ultimate Truth—our oneness with God—we act with our bodies as cloaks to our individual souls. We then become true instruments in the hand of God. We realize that we are part of that great cosmic consciousness which is Truth, Love, Perfectness. The moment we realize it we cannot do anything wrong. How can one do any harm when one realizes his oneness with the whole universe? He can only love since this whole universe is nothing but an expansion of his greater Self. To love one's own self is the fundamental nature of all being. Thus a realized soul is nothing but an embodiment

of love. As long as we are unaware of this oneness with the universe, we think ourselves as separate entities and we love our little selves only and we act with selfish ends. Thus Realization from Vedantic point of view is annihilation of this little self or ego and to have selflessness. The perfect benevolence termed as "ren" by Confucius has been defined by him as "selfless love". When one is established in this "ren" he can be called a Realized Self from the Vedantic point of view.

This is God-consciousness. This is Perfection. This is the end of evolution for an individual. This is freedom from all fear, anxiety, and other fetters of life. This Realization is our birthright and we can have it in this very life. When one attains to the Realization he becomes a Buddha or a Christ and boldly says, "I and my Father are one". Thus Vedanta teaches that we all have the potentiality of becoming a Buddha or a Christ.

Vedanta Philosophy being founded on the theory of evolution describes that everything in this universe is in its own stage of spiritual evolution, and different religions are nothing but different roads suitable to different peoples. A beginner in the spiritual life cannot comprehend the highest ideal of non-dualism, the Tao of the Taoists, Monism, or Nirvana of the Himayana School of Buddhism. He will have to pass through different stages. First he will think of God as extra cosmic. Then he will gradually come into a conception of God who is immanent and resident in nature, intra-cosmic. And when he can rise a little higher, he will realize that God is the Absolute Being, the Reality behind all these diversities of names and forms. Thus it is only in India among the Hindus that we find that religious persecution is almost absent. Vedanta by its very philosophy cannot but support all the religions. It does not merely advocate tolerance; it teaches reverence to each others faith and belief. Thus a true Vedantist does not believe in conversion.

According to Vedanta all these different religions of the world fall into three different Yogas or methods of realizing God—One: Bhakti, the method of love, devotion and worship; Two: Jnana, the method of discrimination and knowledge; Three: Karma, the method of selfless service. All these three Yogas ultimately lead to Raja Yoga, the method of meditation and con-

centration which leads one to God-realization.

Vedanta states that God, the Great Cosmic Consciousness, has incarnated Himself in human forms or other animal forms many times throughout the history whenever there was a waning of morality and righteousness. An Incarnation of God in human form comes to earth, generating a strong spiritual force which he passes on to his disciples who spread his teachings. The strength of this spiritual force increases from generation to generation, and reaches a climax. Then it gradually weakens. In time of religious waning, God must come again. Thus Vedanta accepts Krishna, Buddha, Christ and many others as descents of the same Divine Power. Such incarnations proclaim the same truth, but the form of their teachings may differ to suit the requirements of their time and area of influence.

Many Vedantists believe that God has incarnated again in our age, in the form of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna was born in Bengal in 1879. He was unique in that he practiced in turn, religious disciplines of all sects of Hinduism, and of Christianity and Mohammedanism and reached God-vision by each of these paths. He thus again confirmed the statement of the Vedas experiencing the Truth himself, "Truth is one, sages call it by various names".

To those who are dogmatic in their own religious beliefs and try to bring others to light, Sri Ramakrishna says in his teaching to one of his disciples, thus: "That's the one hobby of you Calcutta people, giving lectures and bringing others to the light! No one ever stops to consider how to get the light himself. Who are you to teach?"

"He who is Lord of the universe will teach everyone. He alone teaches us, who has created this universe, who has made the sun and the moon, men and beasts, and all other beings; who has provided means for their sustenance; who has given children parents and endowed them with love to bring them up. The Lord has done so many things, will He not show people the way to worship Him? If they need teaching, then He will be the Teacher. He is our inner guide.

Suppose there is an error in worshiping the clay image; doesn't God know that through it, He alone is being invoked? He will be pleased with that very worship, why should you get a headache over it? You had better try for knowledge and devotion for yourself.

You were talking of worship-

ping the clay image. Even if the image is made of clay, there is need for that sort of worship. God Himself has provided different forms of worship. He who is the Lord of the universe has arranged all these forms to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.

The mother cooks different dishes to suit the tastes of her different children. Suppose she has five children. If there is a fish to cook, she prepares various dishes from it, Pilau, pickled fish, fried fish, and so on, to suit their different tastes and powers of digestion. But it is all the same fish". Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Vivekananda, the leader of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples proclaimed the truth of all religions, the divinity of the soul and the oneness of all existence, as the dynamic representative of Hinduism at the World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago in 1893. He with his brother disciples founded the first Vedanta Centres in America and England. No more vital or brilliant presentation of Vedanta exists than in the published lectures of Vivekananda.

PRAYER:

"Our Father, help us to act on the bit of truth we know.

If we say we believe in brotherhood, give us the determination to make full and creative life possible for all people.

If we say we believe in love, give us courage to take the risks involved in loving intelligently.

If we say we believe in prayer, give us the willingness to face ourselves fearlessly, to think courageously about the problems confronting us, to work for the achievement of a radiant life.

If we say we believe we have responsibility to share life, give us a sense of our need to reconsecrate ourselves for their sakes.

May we fail none— not those witnesses who have gone before, nor ourselves, nor the youth who follow on. Forgive us our failures, send us forth with resoluteness, that the power which is available to all who call upon Thy Name." Amen.

--By Jane Saddler.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees in February, 1956 was a sad occasion. The loss of our beloved Executive Secretary, Carl A. Evans, made the prospect of a future without his great understanding and magnificent vision, inconceivable. Only through prayer and the wonderful letters of encouragement from all sides, was Fellowship in Prayer sustained.

The 1957 meeting was held, February 6. Although the year between was one of great vicissitudes and problems, the spirit of the meeting was one of gratitude—gratitude to each and everyone who has helped or been helped by Fellowship in Prayer and to God who has truly blessed the progress of the organization. Fellowship in Prayer now has contacts on every continent. The cooperation afforded its efforts by the various faiths throughout the world is generous and their search for understanding of each other is substantial and sincere. It is with such immeasurable facts that we must content ourselves in the evaluation of so intangible a thing as the purpose for which Fellowship in Prayer was founded.

The bi-monthly issues of the publication have acquainted you with three new advisors and three new contributing editors, - during the year - whose work is meeting with excellent response. Reports of other developments have reached you through their pages. Appreciation was expressed for all these efforts.

By action of the Board, Miss Kathryn G. Brown, who has carried on through a year of great personal loss and grief, almost single-handed, becomes Executive Secretary with the gratitude of all. The Executive Committee of the Board was commissioned to continue its endeavors to find additional personnel to assist Miss Brown in the executive and secretarial duties, the volume of which is tremendous.

In spite of the generous and willing volunteer help upon which Fellowship in Prayer relies, maintenance and operating expenses must be met. The financial situation is, indeed, precarious. Immediate action is essential. The Board of Trustees earnestly confidently and prayerfully asks for help in this emergency.

Fellowship in Prayer *(Incorporated)* moves forward into its eighth year.

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A NEW CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Fellowship in Prayer takes pleasure in presenting Sri Nachiketa of Calcutta, India, as a contributing editor and in welcoming such a scholar to its staff.

Sri Nachiketa earned his M. A. degree in Sanskrit from the University of Calcutta. Following this he did research and translations in Chinese, later attending Peking University. On returning to India, he assisted in founding schools for boys and girls. In 1955, having received a fellowship from Harvard-Yenching Institute, he came to the United States to study classical Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan. At present, he is attached to Vedanta Centre, La Crescenta, California, but later in the year will return to India.

We are, indeed, honored to include Sri Nachiketa on our staff of contributing editors.

APPRECIATION

To our loyal contributing editors we extend, as always, warm and humble thanks for the articles appearing herein, as well as other material received. We are likewise exceedingly grateful for the following—

PRAYER TO GOD	*From the writings of our Founder.*
A VESPER	*By A. E. Johnson.*
CREATIVE PRAYER	*By Grace Wares.*
MEDITATION	*By Edward J. Allsop.*
THY WILL BE DONE	*By James Keller.*
A NURSE'S PRAYER	*By Dorothy J. Brown, RN., Ass't Supt. of Nurses - Delafield, and Esther Mamaril, RN., Staff Nurse from Catabaco, Philippines.*
PRAYER IS THE LANGUAGE	*From Nat'l Baha'i Press.*
Drawning on Center Spread	*By Helen Dudley Young.*
PRAYER	*By Jane Saddler.*
The Vignettes	*By La Verne Moritz.*

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NOTICES and COMMENTS

A NEW BOOK. William Ernest Hocking, Alford Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, whose writings are familiar to the readers of these pages has sent us a copy of his twentieth and latest book "The Coming World Civilization", Harper Bros., New York (XIV plus 210 pp., $3.75). It is the sort of book from which one never ceases to gain ideas, written in a way which gives one the feeling he is present at a serious discussion being carried on among learned men.

This book is a scholarly presentation of present-day issues in politics and religion, their development traced through the history of past movements and philosophies of world civilizations. It closes with an endeavor to chart a forward passage toward a civilization of promise and meaning which will make "for the healing of nations".

The book does not lend itself to superficial reading but to the earnest student there is much to provoke deep thinking. We heartily endorse such statements as "What every man knows is that religion is and has to be cosmic business, not hemispherical nor otherwise limited in its competence to interpret and address the God of all mankind (p.80)", and "It is only in religion that a demand to love can be in order, and a failure to love be deemed a sin (p.89)".

We are very grateful to Dr. Hocking for our copy.

WORLD RELIGIONS. The article herein on Vedanta Philosophy is one in the series on the various world religions which are being presented within these pages from time to time. By recognizing the contribution which each religion has made to the world and the common aims of all, we can better understand each other and live together in a unity of spirit.

MEMORIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS. We are, indeed, grateful for the gift subscriptions to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER which are being sent - in memory of our Founder - to various colleges and libraries.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is printed bi-monthly (February, April, June, August, October and December) and the annual subscription rate is $2.00.

As space is so limited in this issue, other acknowledgments and announcements will appear in April.

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A New Year's Prayer

Of Thee, dear Lord, I ask
No thing save this,
In each appointed task
To find but bliss.

Make thou my heart to sing
With joy and be
A lute whose every string
Yields melody.

Touch thou mine eyes to find
Of life the best—
Peace and companions kind,
Labor and rest.

Thine be the call to give
Gladness each day;
Lord while 'tis mine to live
For this I pray.

Keep thou my courage strong;
My hopes keep high;
So shall I live like song
And like song, die.

--Frank Dempster Sherman.

Fellowship in Prayer
22 East 29th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

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